HOURS AT HOME:

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GODFRIED AUGUST BÜRGER.

BY A STUDENT OF GERMAN LITERATURE.

An old and beautiful tradition relates that a Southern tribe of Indians, defeated in war and driven from the graves and hunting-grounds of their fathers, came one day about sunset upon the banks of a noble river, where gleams of light, like the benedictions of a parting god, mingled with the gloom and shadow of the forest. The fight had been long and desperate, and even the hardiest warriors were beginning to feel the sinews of their limbs grow slack. Weary and faint, the chief threw down the knife and tomahawk, exclaiming, "Here we rest! here we rest!" How many a man has come like these hunted savages, to the shores of another broad river, come faint and weary from the heat and anguish of the battle of life, from fierce conflict with seen and unseen foes; to whom the very sunshine has been a mockery; has come to the River of Death, and cried out, "Here I rest! here I rest!"

Such a man was the German poet Bürger. His whole life was a battle with adversity, and in death alone he found the peace he had always craved. Nor even death put an end to the dispute that raged during his lifetime in regard to his moral and literary character. For many years it was carried on with acrimony when it could no longer affect him. Nor will this seem surprising, when we consider his character. Wayward and erratic, like Burns and Poe, to both of whom he bears certain other resemblances, he perplexed all judgments for a time by an endless contradiction of good and evil qualities, through which it was impossible to discover any trace of a directing principle. Nor was it an easy task, while partisan feeling was warm on either side, to perceive justly in what relative proportions the good and evil in him were compounded, and while one party condemned his life and writings with undeserved severity, the other gave a measure of promise to both, which the sober judgment of after years has very materially reduced. But praise, blame, and pity have done their work; from every point of view his life and writings have been subjected to loving and unloving scrutiny, until both sides yielding somewhat here and there, a correct estimate of his character has been reached at length. And though revealing, alas! a saddening want of principle and everything like a firm purpose, or a noble end to be reached, there is enough remaining of generous and endearing qualities to give interest to the story of his life. It has also its touching and stern admonitions, voices of warning from the depths of tragic experience, sad appealings to human charity. And it seems to me that a half hour might not be lost in plucking some of the flowers of life and death, of sweet and of bitter odor, which grow out of his grave.

Godfried August Bürger was born on New-Year's day, 1748, at Wolmerswende, in the principality of Halberstadt. His father was a clergyman, of a sluggish and indolent disposition, while his mother was noted for energy and intellect. Young Bürger, unfortunately, inherited the qualities of both parents in proportions that

insured him a lifetime of misery. With more of the father's temperament he would have gone through the world a free and easy lounger, taking things as they came without care or thought for the morrow; with somewhat more of the fine qualities and decision of his mother, he might have risen above the degrading tendency of his lower nature, with the impulse and the power to throw himself manfully into the whirl of life and action. But from boyhood he was indolent and wayward, and with a fair capacity for the acquisition of knowledge refused to apply himself to study. Parental urging, the more practical argument of the rod, failed to stimulate the flagging disposition, and at the age of ten he could scarcely even read. He would play the truant for whole days, sometimes late into the night, in the thickest part of a somewhat lonesome wood in the neighborhood, pleasing himself with the sombre fancies inspired by the genius of the place. It was no healthy love of nature that led the young truant into those deep shadows; he loved the seclusion and twilight gloom, and the sense of superstitious mystery breathed from the murmur of the leaves; an ominous characteristic! Bürger was never a child of light.

At the age of twelve we find him living with his grandfather at Aschersleben, and attending the lyceum of that city. Though making but little progress in his studies, he showed no lack of mother-wit and a strong inclination to poetry, which generally took the form of epigrams against schoolmates who offended him. But a keen satire on the extra-sized bag-wig or a self-important senior, which caused no little merriment among the other scholars, brought upon him so unmerciful a beating from the incensed victim, that his grandfather withdrew him from the lyceum, and sent him to study theology at Halle. Had Bürger been left to his own choice he would have devoted himself entirely to literary culture, towards which he was drawn by inclination and turn of mind; but dependent on the grandfather's purse for support, he had not the nerve to oppose the old gentleman's wishes, however unwise and contrary to the promptings of his own nature. He made up for the sacrifice, however, by neglecting the uncongenial and dry study, and applying himself vigorously in other directions. Casting off, by a strong effort of will, his indolent, dreamy habits, he became a diligent student of æsthetics and ancient and modern poetry. Warmhearted and cordial in the main, though not unfrequently irritable and self-willed, he was just the one to attract the goodfellowship which he had done well to avoid. His most intimate companion at Halle was a certain counsellor Klotze, a man of fine culture but of loose morals, by whom he was introduced to a circle of convivial spirits, in whose company he received irreparable moral injury. It may be doubted if his studies at this time were in any sense the seeds of a refined and noble culture, for the degradation of the moral impulses of a man inevitably lowers the tone of his intellect. Bürger took the downward road on the run, and soon became noted as the wildest of the wild. Hearing at length how matters were going on, his grandfather recalled him in no very gracious mood.

Finding means to pacify the justly incensed old gentleman, Bürger was sent to make another trial of life as a law student at Göttingen. For a few months every thing went well. He applied himself earnestly and assiduously to his studies, with satisfactory progress. But, falling once more into the society of genial, convivial fellows, his old tastes and habits came back upon him with a force which his new character was unable to resist. It was the old story over again—temptation, an impotent struggle, and another fall into licentiousness and extravagance. His grandfather, soon apprised of it, and as the only means of bringing the graceless fellow to his senses, withdrew his supplies, and threw him upon his own resources. Deeply in debt, and a prey to the severest chidings of conscience, Bürger was almost beside himself with remorse and desperation. But this seemingly adverse stroke of

fortune was ordered by his good genius, for the purpose of rousing him out of his deathful sleep in the bowers of false delight. The change it wrought was indeed marvelous. He once more, and forever, shook loose from his licentious companions, again studied diligently, and by giving private instruction earned the means of support, and the noble feeling of independence and manly self-respect.

At this time, fortunately for himself and for us, he fell in with a company of choice spirits, who did for German literature what the pre-Raphaelites are doing in our own day for English art. Herder and Klopstock had already burst the shackles which French philosophy had riveted to the limbs of an awakening nation, and given a living, healthful impulse to the literature of their native land. It was the ambition of the Göttingen Society to keep up the influence and carry out the purposes of those great leaders. They were all young men, thoroughly alive with the spirit of the new times, conscious of strength and exultant in the hope of a glorious victory. For, though great names, and the authority of venerable forms and old traditionary feeling were against the new order of things, it required no very keen discernment to see that the whole nation was stirring and growing restless with the fresh blood in its veins. Men were beginning to assert the right of individual opinion, of free thought and action. All the living intellect of the nation was aroused to tear aside the mummery of an exhausted and soulless formality from laws, literature, and religion. And hence that remarkable crisis in the history of Germany, of which the circles and eddies reach down to our own day.

Though pursuing diverging paths, and ultimately far apart, the members of the Göttingen Society made their influence widely felt in the new movement, and their names are still remembered with gratitude. Bürger was soon a favorite with all the members. His poems were read aloud at their weekly meetings, where they received the benefit of unsparing criticism, which he always took in good part. He was accustomed to write impulsively, and to correct, alter, and add with critical deliberation; and what he left undone was finished by his friends. It is said that the completed poem would sometimes contain not so much as a line of the first draught. How he could preserve so much spirit, and such a forceful rush of style and rhythm, in spite of the cool and patient emendation, is certainly a matter of wonder. These were the happiest days of Bürger's life. Poor in purse, he was rich in the nobler wealth of a good conscience, a spirit well employed, and the hope of a high and enduring fame in the literature of his native country.

But these palmy days were of short duration. Careless and always improvident, he had contracted many debts in Göttingen, which he had no means, nor the prospect of any, to pay off. It was plain that he must quit the jovial and literary society of Göttingen for the stern and practical ways of life. The good offices of his friend Boie obtained for him a stewardship on the manor of Alten Gleichen, under the Lords of Uslar. The salary, though small enough, would have sufficed, with prudence and economy, which poor Bürger did not possess, to keep him from want; and his grandfather, finding him ready to help himself in an honorable calling, generously provided him with the means of paying his debts. Unfortunately, in the absence of his faithful adviser Boie, this money was intrusted to a young scapegrace of a student, and by him soon squandered. He was unable to replace it; and this flagrant breach of trust involved Bürger in a snare of pecuniary difficulties from which he escaped only when he laid his head in the grave.

From the solitariness and ennui of his secluded country home, Bürger sought refuge in the companionship of the muses. Here he wrote Lenore, the best of his poems, which has won him a world-wide celebrity. The wildness of the legend, and the extraordinary force and forward rush of the rhythm, the strength and vi-

vacity of the style, made the balled a "success" from the very first. It produced a great sensation all over Germany, and set nervous people to seeing visions o' nights, of spectre horsemen eloping with blooming maids, followed by a train of horrible churchyard-things, dry old skeletons and bodies fresh in their shrouds. Perhaps no other ballad ever attained to a more general popularity. It has become a part of the literature of the world. Something of all this it owes to the illustration of it by many of the first artists of Europe, but it contains in its own vigorous lines all the elements of extended and enduring popularity.

But even then the dark cloud was coming, in comparison with which all other sorrows and trials were but as summer nights between golden evenings and the dewy light of unclouded mornings. Bürger began to feel lonely in the country, where his friends could rarely visit him, and to wish for nearer companionship, Not insensible, however, to the practical in wedded life, he fixed his choice, with more worldly prudence than love, upon the daughter of a neighboring farmer. Scarcely was he bethrothed, when he saw for the first time the younger sister of his maiden, a beautiful girl of fourteen years, the future Molly of his lyric poems. Here was one of those matches which are said to be made in heaven. At first sight they fell in love with each other; and had Bürger known himself, and how dangerous it is to trifle with the human heart, he never would have married her sister. But he seemed fated by the most wayward and reckless disregard of principle and common sense, always to bring unfortunate and unmerciful disaster upon himself. Fully conscious, yet keeping her in ignorance of the fact, that he never could love her, he married Amalia, in defiance of nature's great laws for the union of souls and hands. Augusta, the Beloved, stood as bridesmaid to the Unbeloved. It was the first act of a life-long tragedy. Soon awakened from her dreams of happiness, but not crushed, Amalia resolved that the world should never, from any act of hers, have reason to suspect the heart-aches, the wretchedness and desolation of their home. And right nobly she did her part. Meekly, but with true heroism submitting to her bitter lot, she was ever the gentle and unmurmuring partner of his life. Had Bürger endured his self-imposed misery with half the fortitude of this noble woman, the remainder of his story might have worn a happier face. But he yielded and bent unmanfully under the weight of troubles which he had lacked the manhood to prevent, and gradually sank to a pitiful depth of moral degradation, from which he roused up but once or twice, and then only for a short time. We cannot but pity Bürger and Augusta; and though our sympathy mixes with contempt for the man without manliness, and aversion for the woman without womanliness, we shall be none the worse for a charitable judgment of the unhappy pair. Their errors cost them many a bitter struggle, for nature, a kind and loving parent, is a stern and dreadful punisher, whose laws may never be broken with impunity. Every effort on the part of the lovers to forget each other, only heightened the intensity of their passion. And thus it went on for ten years.

It was impossible to conceal all this from the social spies that infest every neighborhood, and it soon became known abroad that Bürger loved his wife's sister and did not love his wife, and of course stories of deeper wrong were freely circulated. And it would be hard to say how it could have been otherwise; for unlawful love seldom restrains itself within Platonic limits, and Burger's life had not been so strictly Puritanic as to place him above suspicion. But we have good reason for believing that society did him an injustice in these surmises.

Few of his poems written at this period, with the exception of those addressed to "Molly," give any indication of the misery which was eating away his heart, for he was fain to forget himself in his art; but in those poems which seemed wrung from his soul by a vehemence of passion which would be uttered, there are revelations which cause one to shudder, and to wonder how mortal man could bear up

at all under such anguish. Yet some of his wittiest and best poems date from this period of his life. I cannot bring myself to attempt a translation of the "Elegy," or, indeed, any of the most characteristic pieces of self-confession; but here is a specimen (bereft of much of its grace and prettiness in the process of translation) of his playful and tender style, unhurt by that grossness of feeling which deforms so many of his poems. It was written in 1775, the year after his marriage:

MY DEARIE.

My Dearie holds me, day by day,
In bonds of love securely;
Am alway near her, never stray;
She holds me over-surely.
I may not break the woven band,
Nor scorn my jailer's warning;
She keeps me fettered to her hand,
From morning round to morning.

My Dearie holds me, day by day,
In her modest cell about her;
I may not forth to feast, nor play,
Nor dancing green, without her;
Am, sooth, no churlish fool myself,
Besides her hear and see none;
Can read her coaxing eyes so well,
That words there need to be none.

And who, in sooth, was born for thee,
And who for me, my Dearie?
Ah, darling! without thee and me,
Were thou and I heart-weary.
And when grim death his sickle swings,
One from the other reaping,
God! what may be, for thee and me,
Of bitterness and weeping!

In 1776 Bürger wrote his famous Song of the Brave Man, and began a translation of the Iliad, but in the latter undertaking encountered the keen rivalry of the younger Count Stolberg, one of the Göttingen fraternity, and after publishing six books, gave it up as a hopeless task.

The poet's life shows nothing more worthy of note until 1780, when, with the hope of bettering his fortune, he was induced to take a farm in Appenrode. The attempt ended in disappointment, and after expending most of his wife's inheritance, (her father having died meanwhile) Bürger was forced to give up an undertaking for which he was wholly unfitted. And since misfortunes never come singly, the same fellow who had cheated him out of his money at Göttingen, chose this time to accuse him to the Lords of Uslar of official dishonesty. Bürger easily justified himself, but the public being deeply prejudiced against him, he felt bound to resign, a resolution to which the government at once acceded. Poets rarely succeed as men of business. Their habits of mind unfit them, in general, for practical energy and promptness, and they have no sympathy with the sharpness and calculation required in dealing with men who keep a keen eye on their own interests. It is no wonder that Bürger, with his careless, indolent ways, should lay himself open to suspicion.

Not long afterwards he was called to look down into the grave of one who for ten long years of misery had faithfully shared all his misfortunes and lightened his burdens without sharing the love which was given wrongfully to another. It is said that Bürger's heart smote him there, when too late, and that he bitterly reproached himself for his conduct towards her. But now a brighter day seemed about to dawn upon the unhappy poet. He began a course of lectures at Göttingen upon æsthetics, and resumed the publication of a literary journal on which he had been engaged previous to his residence at Alten Gleichen, and as soon as he was assured of his income, he was married to his long-loved Molly. It was an interlude of brief but intense joy. His spirits took a sudden spring, and burst forth in a long and extravagant poem to the "Sole Woman," as he styled his Molly. It might seem as if Providence might have granted him a respite for the rest of his life from the misery which had punished the errors of his earlier days. But Providence was other minded, and within one year his Molly was carried to her grave. With her he buried heart and hope, and whatever he did after that sad day, when he looked upon her for the last time, was done without either.

The reception of certain academic honors, and the prospect of a respectable income from his lectures and the sale of his books, at length induced Bürger to wish to assemble his scattered family under his own roof again; and since he would need

a housekeeper and his children a mother, he began to look about for the proper person to fill both of those responsible positions. While in this mood, he received from a Swabian maiden, upon whom his poems had made a deep impression, a poetical offer of her heart and hand. Here was something quite like an indication of Providence, and withal as romantic and flattering as poor poet could desire. At first he was inclined to treat the affair as a lively joke; but other letters followed, showing the unknown singer to be not only in earnest, but a lady of culture and refinement, and he was soon willing to take the advice of his friends, who were decidedly in favor of the proposed match. He returned a poetical answer; serious negotiations followed, which resulted in his marriage with the lively Swabian. This was in 1790, about four years after the death of his Molly. All promised well for a time; but—these *buts* come in so sadly and so often!—the romantic union soon proved as unhappy as it was romantic, and after two years of most painful life the parties were divorced. It would almost seem as if nature, in punishment of his first violation of her laws of the heart, had ordained that he should never be happy in marriage. Poor Bürger! Weary, heavy laden with infirmities of body and worse ones of the soul, he crept feebly through the remainder of his life towards a wished-for grave.

But he was not to reach it unsmitten. While the man whose Lenore was the favorite ballad of a nation was earning a scanty support in the loneliness of his study, and comforting himself, in the absence of all hope for the present life, with the exulting thought that his poetry was immortal, a brother's hand was stretched forth to dash that last consolation from his heart. It is almost needless to say that Schiller's critique proceeded from nothing but a desire to check what he considered a degradation of art, and that in many respects it was just and right. No one, after reading half a dozen of Bürger's poems taken at random from his volumes, can dispute the justice of the charge of grossness and vulgarity, and it is undeniable that his themes are too often worthless and low. But in his remarks upon the characteristics of a genuine poet of the people, Schiller betrays a singular lack of sympathy with the spirit of modern popular poetry. His temperament and his culture led him to the worship of the classical and the ideal in art. His eyes were always fixed upon the loftiest standards of human greatness, and in his poems he sought to give expression to the purest and noblest thoughts only of which his mind was capable. Grace, Beauty, Purity and Greatness, were the Divinities at whose altars he worshiped. He regarded poetry as a divine effluence, which must never be polluted by the dust and sweat and tears of human passion, sin, and sorrow. It was never to be made the utterance of importunate feeling. Sorrow must not be sung until the clouds have passed over, leaving the poet in serene sunlight, with the memory of the dark time playing softly on the chords of his heart, like winds dying through a forest after a storm. Natural poetry, the unidealized expression of the woes and joys that fleck the pathway of every man with light and shadow, was abhorrent to his very soul. He demanded that every poet should be a man of refined taste and elegant culture, and that the expression of feeling should be general and never individual. He denied the name of poet to the man who did not exalt every emotion which he sung out of the narrow limits of his own personality into the region of the ideal and the universal.

It is obvious that he was not the man to understand a poet like Bürger, whose lyrics are wholly passional, and right from a heart of strong and earnest but never refined emotion. They gushed out of his stricken soul like the water from the rock which Moses smote; and no wonder that the current should often be turbid and impure.

But Bürger's fame as a poet rests chiefly on his ballads, and of these the best and most widely known are Lenore, the Song of the Brave Man, and the Wild Hunts-

man. The first two have been translated so often and so successfully, that I need not stop to speak of them. Scott's imitation of the Wild Huntsman must not be taken as in any sense a reflex of the German poem; it omits many important and characteristic touches, and reads heavily, which cannot be said of the original. The translation by Mr. Taylor pretends to strict fidelity, with how much truth may be inferred from the fact that it is shorter by half a dozen stanzas! This ballad contains some of Bürger's most characteristic and effective poetry. The first part trails a little, but the description of the darkness suddenly falling upon the wretched huntsman, and the beginning of the infernal chase, is one of the finest passages of modern ballad-writing. As I am acquainted with no faithful translation of this poem, I have attempted to versify a few stanzas, from the twenty-sixth to the close, preserving as far as possible everything characteristic of the poet, even to the queer but expressive interjections which excited Schiller's contemptuous sarcasm. It must be premised that the Wildgrave going on a hunt of a Sabbath morning is met by two riders, one coming from the right, the other from the left, the first being a good and the latter an evil spirit, each of whom, according to his nature, urges him on or admonishes him to turn back. The evil spirit prevails. The Wildgrave rides over the fields of the poor, tramples down their flocks, kills a shepherd, until at length the hunted stag finds refuge in a hermitage. The holy man and the good angel remonstrate in vain; the evil spirit prevails, and the Wildgrave dashes on. The rest of the story is contained in the following verses:

He cracked his whip, his horn he blew:
  Ho, holla, comrades, up and on ——
But man and cell were swept from view,
  The huntsmen and the hounds were gone!
Hushed clamp and tramp and wild hallooing;
The silence of the grave ensuing!

Struck and amazed he stared around;
  He tried his horn—no strain it blew;
He shouted—but he made no sound;
  No snap from brandished whip there flew.
He urged his horse with desperate spurring;
But from the fatal spot no stirring!

Drear darkness closes o'er the plain,
  Dark, darker—as where dwell the dead;
Low roars it, like a far-off main;
  From the cloud-blackness, overhead,
Down to the shuddering wretch thereunder,
This dread doom called a voice of thunder:

"Thou demon-hearted evil doer,
  Bold against God and man and brute;
The cry of creature and the poor,
  Crushed by thy bloody-trampling foot,
Thee loudly to the Judgment warneth,
Where high the torch of Vengeance burneth.

"Fly, monster! fly in endless rounds,
  No rest nor breathing from this hour,
Before the demon and his hounds;
  That evermore the great in power
May know and dread the doom he beareth,
Who creature nor Creator spareth!"

Then lurid flames sulphureous shone,
  Dim lightning through the forest gloom;
Cold horror thrilled through flesh and bone,—
  So smothering all, so deaf and dumb!
Grim terrors throng the forward hollow,
Behind, deep, thunderous rumblings follow.

Surge the wild terrors,—fierce the rout!
  And from the gaping earth—hu hu!
A swarthy giant-fist grasps out,
  And stretches wide, and clinches to;
Ha! in the whirlwind towards him clutching!
Away! back staring, forward crouching!

Spring flames about him high and higher,
  Of green and blue and blood-red glare;
Heaves a tempestuous sea of fire;
  And hell-born creatures wallow there!
Leap hell-hounds from the hollow surges;
A ghastly huntsman fiercely urges!

He springs, he scours through wood and plain,
  And shrieks, and cries, and aye looks back;
Through the wide world he flies amain;
  Follow and rave the infernal pack:
By day, to earth's deep caverns keeping;
High through the air when men are sleeping.

He glares behind him as he flies,
  Harried and driven on like wind;
Still on the hell-dogs fixed his eyes,
  Urged madly onward by the Fiend;
Must see their grim jaws fiercely gaping,
Must hear the gnashing and the snapping.

'Twas thus the Magic Hunt began,
  Which must endure till Judgment day.—
Full oft by night some outlawed man
  Pales as it scours athwart his way;
And many a huntsman (might he dare it)
About the hearthstone could declare it.

Schiller's criticism was a severe blow to the poet, broken in spirit and enfeebled by sickness. It was the finishing stroke to a lifetime of misery, which has few parallels in the annals of literature. From

his very boyhood up he was always in trouble, and never grew wiser from his experience. Impulsive indecision and waywardness mark every step of his career. If he did not absolutely fling it away more than once when happiness was within his reach, he allowed it to slip through his fingers with fatal recklessness. When in urgent want and misery, he was capable of making noble exertions to clear himself from the fatal toils; but never learned how to keep clear of them. He never saw "the lion's shadow ere itself." It has been urged in palliation of his errors that Bürger inherited from his father an indolent disposition, from which it was impossible to rise with a heart never so willing. But in transient efforts he showed that he was able to rise above it, and that all that was lacking to make him happy and successful was moral purpose and noble principle. Lacking these, his life was—what it was. It is not only in practical life that this fatal lack of moral stamina is apparent; every page of his writings gives fatal evidence of it. It may seem strange that the impulse received in the society of the Göttingen friends had so short an existence, especially as during his residence there he seemed awakened to a noble sense of the part he might take in the glory of the new German era. But some men are like metals that grow hot in a strong fire, without being vitally kindled. Bürger could not work solely from within; he needed the influence of friends to keep him steadily to his purpose, and of course when beyond the reach of such influence he soon grew careless and indolent, until roused by calamity or want.

The wild freaks and irregularities of men like Bürger, Burns, Poe, and others, have often been laid to the score of talent and genius.

> Even the light that led astray
> Was light from heaven.

But a more monstrous and degrading falsehood was never uttered in palliation of error. The mere thought of the great names in literature and art refutes it effectually forever. Dante, Shakspeare, Milton—these are enough. The soul of a man of high and noble genius, stands nearer the throne of God than other souls, bathes in holier light, and finds strength for deeper seeing into the heart of nature and humanity; and such a man is therefore always earnest and religious. The licentiousness of men like Beaumont and Fletcher and Lord Byron, so far from resulting from their genius, shows that their lower nature was too strong for the higher. It is significant, too, that these very men never write their best except upon noble and pure themes.

Bürger's life was now rapidly drawing to its close. Every step of his way, with here and there a gleam of sunshine, had been under cloud; not the sweet cloud of summer rain, with its balm for flowers and thirsty roots, and rainbows and glorious light at parting, but such a dull dreary cloud as showered ashes and death over Pompeii. There was no hope of the sun after it, nor of sweet breathing. A sadder death-bed cannot be imagined. It is written that precious seed sown in tears shall be reaped in joy; but Bürger had sown only seeds of misery, and the abundant harvest threw a dark shadow across his dying hours. It is sad to know that extreme poverty increased the sufferings of his last days, and that but for the timely and unsolicited assistance of the government, he must have known what it is to hunger.

He died at Göttingen on the eighth of June, 1794. A few years later a simple monument was erected in his favorite garden-walk in that city, to the memory of one who had been a warm friend, a kind father, and except in one great error, an affectionate husband. His social qualities were generous and hearty in the extreme, and no one has ever questioned the goodness of his heart. But that fatal lack of moral principle rendered all his other virtues nugatory. Three ballads, a few lyric poems, one or two sonnets—not more than eight or ten in all—form the legacy of his talents to posterity. Alas, that on the tomb-stone of a man of his powers we must read the mournfullest of all mournful epitaphs:

"IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN!"

PARTED.

THE broad, still moonlight on the river slept,
And marginward the shortening shadows crept,
As, brightening one by one the cloudy bars,
The moon climbed upward 'mong the paling stars.
We crossed the bridge upon our homeward walk;
A heart-full silence hushed our earnest talk;
So few the moments! oh, so near the end!
Then still and low thou spakest, O my friend:
"I may not henceforth tread life's path with thee,
But evermore, whate'er my lot may be,
Think of me always as at work for Him
Who lived and died for us." My eyes grew dim
With tears at thy last words beneath thy breath,
"I will be faithful even unto death
To Him—and thee!"
O my beloved! thou
Hast nobly wrought thy life's great work, and now
Thy weary hands and feet, thy lonely breast,
Are laid beneath the church-yard turf to rest.
And, lingering beside the hallowed stone,
Forlorn upon life's dreary path, alone,
I think of thee. Alas! my earth-bound thought,
Though it could follow, while thy task was wrought
On earth, with blessing and with loving prayer,
Finds pearly gates shut close between us, where
Thou workest now the unknown work of heaven.
Yet through their white, translucent sheen is given
This one dear glimpse of thee and what thou art,—
Thou workest still for Christ,—and on my heart
The echo of thy words falls soothingly,
Thou wilt be true to Him and true to me.
For, true till death means, surely, "true forever."
Death binds the faithful hearts it cannot sever.
Life could not change thee. On the changeless shore
Thou art no less my own. I ask no more.